

**GREAT BARRINGTON FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM**  
**TOWN HALL**  
**334 MAIN STREET, GREAT BARRINGTON, MA**  
**FEBRUARY 2, 2012**  
**5:30 P.M.**

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:**  
**THOMAS BLAUVELT, CHAIRMAN**  
**MARK LEFENFELD**  
**LOUIS J. STARK – Arrived at 6:00 p.m.**  
**WALTER ATWOOD**  
**ANDREW MORO**

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

1. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**
    - A. **Minutes from the December 29, 2011 meeting**
- MOTION:** Mr. Atwood to approve.  
**SECOND:** Mr. Lefenfeld  
**VOTE:** 5-0

Mr. Lefenfeld noted that at the last meeting Mr. O'Donnell said that there were additional costs for the Main Street reconstruction project for both construction and engineering. The \$150,000 that was budgeted last year for engineering costs on the side streets was used for the additional costs for the Main Street project. Mr. Atwood said that the reason we had to spend the extra money on engineering design is because in front of the Neighborhood Diner, the peak of the road is higher than the door steps so the state wants a shallower grade in the middle of the road. The problem is that is where the trolley tracks and concrete are. The removal of that section had to be engineered to reduce it.

Mr. Blauvelt said at the last meeting the committee agreed to meet prior to the joint Board of Selectmen/Finance Committee meetings beginning in February. Mr. Blauvelt said he had the following concerns.

Page 4 of 11, Line Item #76 – Salary for the custodians at the Housatonic Community Center. He noted it is going up 50% or \$2,500.

Line Item # 86 - Police Overtime – Now that the department is fully staffed the overtime should be going down. There is a \$7,000 increase.

Page 8 of 11 – Line item #193 – Council on Aging – The salary seems low. Mr. Blauvelt said he wasn't going to bring up this issue.

Southern Berkshire Elderly Transportation – decrease of \$15,000. It was noted that it is being maintained from last year.

Page 9 of 11 – Line Item #207 – Why is the funding for affordable housing being eliminated? There is no dollar amount in that line item.

Page 10 of 11 – Line Item # 241 – Band Programs - \$4,000. It was noted that Mr. Grover receives \$2,500 of that. It was suggested that the Chamber of Commerce could run something and the money could go towards funding the concerts.

Mr. Blauvelt said he e-mailed Mr. O'Donnell to ask the Tax Collector to put together a list of the top 10 people who owe back taxes. The tax collector has been contacting people and filing a claim on the property.

Projects that have been approved at the Town meeting that has not been done yet, i.e., repairing the wall in front of the underpass on Route 41. Mr. Moro said he would check with Mr. O'Donnell on those projects.

Mr. Atwood said that the Berkshire Hills Regional School District assessment for last year went up \$365,000 and the Town only went up \$100,000. The previous year the School District budget went up by \$361,000 and the Town's budget went up \$39,000. He noted the enrollment has dropped. It was noted that in 2007 the School district gave back \$410,000 because that was the first year they were reimbursed by the State.

Mr. Moro said he would like to encourage the Town to downsize on the purchasing of additional fire trucks. Maybe Mr. O'Donnell and the Chief could give a discussion on the future of the fleet and what we can eliminate being replaced. The Town should start charging for going to Hazmat calls. What do we need for the ISO rating? Mr. Moro said out of the \$700,000 costs for the new fire truck, how much is the truck and how much are for the extras. Mr. Atwood said we need to ask about how and who is being paid in the fire Dept. This will be a question for Mr. O'Donnell. Mr. Stark said he is not in favor of the fire engine. Mr. O'Donnell had presented a figure of \$50,000 to repair engine 6 which is a backup pumper. If a new engine is purchased, it will stay in Housatonic and Engine 4 will go to Great Barrington as a backup. There are 5 engines, plus a ladder.

Police Department – Road details is there a charge for the cruiser because it is sitting there idling. It was noted to ask the chief.

Mr. Atwood said he would like to know the state labor rate for custodians and general laborers. What is the DPW construction costs compared to the labor rate? Mr. Atwood said the prevailing wage rate is set in Boston. The rates are different for each area.

Mr. Stark – CIP – he doesn't know why a whole sidewalk needs to be replaced if there are just a few cracks.

Mr. Stark said he thinks the Finance Committee should be aware of union negotiations before they are concluded.

Mr. Stark said he thinks some of the departments may be overstaffed, like the cemetery. Mr. Moro said he would like to see who reports to whom for example who works for Mr. Avery. This would be full time and part time employees.

Mr. Stark said he is concerned about the sewer budget and the upgrade. Mr. Atwood suggested that Mr. Stark go down to tour the plant. There was a question if we pay by gallons or units? It was noted that the Fire District bills by cubic feet and the Housatonic Water bills per gallon.

Police Cruisers – the Town should look into hybrids. A cruiser is purchased on June 1 and the second one is purchased in January because of the mileage. The Crown Victoria is not being made anymore so now they are going to look into other vehicles.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn Wichmann". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carolyn Wichmann  
Secretary